Being a part of the Kingdom: Humility and Repentance

Zanesville, OH | April 28, 2019 | John Pollard | Sermon Notes

**Foundational Scripture:** Matt. 5:3-5

**Intro**:

* The word Kingdom is used 117 times in the gospels of the 151 total times it is used in the entire NT. Such a statistic denotes a high level of significance especially when most if not all of its mention is done by Jesus the Christ. The subject of the Kingdom, its nature and its ideology form the cornerstone of the good news. It is the culmination of all God’s promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It is the fulfillment of everything the prophets spoke about and foreshadowed. It is the OT and NT coming together in matrimony of everything God had laid out since the foundation of the world. The Kingdom is quintessential to Jesus’ ministry, mission and purpose. John preached about the Kingdom (Matt. 3:2) and others in the gospel proclaimed the importance of the Kingdom (Lk. 1:33) but I want you to notice the emphasis Jesus places on the Kingdom in the gospels (Matt. 4:17, 23; 5:20; 6:33; 7:21; Mar. 4:11; 10:14; Lk. 4:43; 9:60; 10:9; Jn. 18:36). In these passages it is perfectly clear that the Kingdom dominates Jesus’ sermons, it dominates His parables and it dominated His purpose. But why? Well, to answer that question we have to first ask what the Kingdom was. It is used primarily in two ways in the NT. The **first way** it is used is to speak of the reign and rule of Christ that He exercises in the kingdom of His people or His church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:6; 5:10). The **second way** is it used is to speak of the consummation of the church in all its glory which is Heaven (Matt. 25:34). The point of these two uses to emphasize the importance of the Kingdom. One cannot go to Heaven without being a part of the church, and one cannot become a part of the church if his/her ultimate goal is not Heaven. And so it is only logical that we turn to the key question, the really important, life-changing question: **What does it take to be a part of the Kingdom?** Matt. 5. marks the beginning of the *“Sermon on the Mount”* which may be the greatest sermon Jesus ever taught. And it’s not because of how He said it and who was listening, but because of what was said. Jesus begins the sermon with what we call the *“Beatitudes*.” And we will note that these blessings aren’t rained down on a people who simply know things. These blessings are only given to people who are actively seeking the Kingdom. And that’s exactly what Jesus is doing here in Matt. 5:3-12. The Beatitudes are blessings to those who want to be a part of the Kingdom and they can be divided into three distinctive groups and today we will discuss the first.

**Entrance and Access to the Kingdom**

1. **Being *“Poor in Spirit”* (Matt. 5:3)**
   1. Jesus begins by saying those who are *“poor in spirit”* will inherit, they will possess, they will have access to this kingdom (v. 3). Isaiah 66:1-2 interprets the meaning of this verse for us. God is so big, He is so powerful, He is so far beyond us that we don’t deserve these blessings. And that’s the point made in Isa. 66:1-2. We have done absolutely nothing deserving of God’s favor. He doesn’t need us (Acts 17:24-25).
   2. But we need Him (Acts 17:26-28). And so, God gives us the opportunity to enjoy His blessings and to be a part of His rule, His reign, His people, His church and ultimately His home but there is a criteria we must meet. We must be humble. We must be of a broken, contrite, spirit.
   3. Without this humility we have no part and no portion with the creator of this world (Lk. 18:16-17). To receive the kingdom as a child is to have a heart that desires humility, simplicity and unsophistication. As adults our lives grow to be so busy and so sophisticated and that usually involves all sorts of problems, complications, trials and suffering etc.
   4. Jesus wants us to know it isn’t complicated to be a part of the kingdom. It doesn’t take a lot. It takes humility and a heart that is willing to follow the simple commands of Jesus which includes submitting to Him. Jesus doesn’t complicate things, we do! And unless we become like children, unless we break our pride and arrogance down, we cannot get into the kingdom.
   5. We were created by a God who is moved by humility. We serve a God who takes notice when we swallow our pride and acknowledge that we need Him (being poor in spirit) and that without Him we have no purpose and no meaning in life. Consider the examples of Ahab (1 Kings 21:17-29) and Manasseh (2 Chron. 33:10-13, 19). If these men achieved hope by being *“poor is spirit”* then there is hope for all of us. The kingdom is open and accessible for all who would be *“poor in spirit.”*
2. **Mourning and Repentance (Matt. 5:4)**
   1. In v. 4, Jesus says we must mourn! This is not mourning over the loss of loved ones and making sure we are showing up at funerals and such. This is mourning over sin. What usually happens is that when become confident, self-inflated and self-centered we fail to see our sin. And if we do we fail to acknowledge it we must be humble and reflect at our actions and mourn over our sin because we have all sinned (1 Jn. 1:8, 10).
   2. David was riding pretty high in his days as king and he became, confident, he became self-reliant and in a moment of supreme selfishness and disobedience, he committed adultery and pre-meditated murder. God needed to bring him down and He wanted David to acknowledge what he had done (2 Sam. 12:7-14).
   3. David acknowledged his sin, repented an turned back to God who He forsook in a moment and that’s all it takes. But because he humbled himself and chose to repent and seek God’s forgiveness he was able to be comforted (Psa. 51). This is what made him a man after God’s own heart. We were created by a God and we serve a God who is moved by humility and repentance (2 Chron. 7:14). There is no sin too big for Him to forgive and remove and there is no hope lost for salvation.
   4. It does not matter what we have done and how bad it is, if we are willing to be poor in spirit and to mourn over sin, we will have access to the kingdom. We have the same opportunity David and the people on the day of Pentecost who murdered Jesus did (Acts 2:36-38) and so we must confess our sins and we will be comforted (2 Cor. 1:3-4; 7:8-10; 1 Jn. 1:9; 2:1-2). There is much comfort to be had in the kingdom for all who mourn over sin.
3. **Being Meek/Gentle (Matt. 5:5)**
   1. In the criteria to be met in order for one to enter and access the kingdom, the state of meekness must be practiced and become a consistent characteristic. What exactly is meekness? Meekness of being meek is having power under control. It is not to be equated with being weak-willed or being taken advantage of.
   2. Being meek is a conscientious choice that must be made on our part for the benefit of our spiritual relationship, our neighbors and the glory of God. We may have strength and the capability of doing certain things but the question is whether or not we are willing to forego such strength and power for the greater goal and the greater good.
   3. Kingdom citizens are commanded and encouraged to meek time and again in the NT (Gal. 5:23; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12; 2 Tim. 2:24-25; Jam. 3:13; 1 Pet. 3:15). The need to show meekness will almost always occur when we are wronged, questioned or insulted. We may have the power to return an insult, get revenge or respond physically but we must have self-control and forego those actions for the greater goal and the greater good.
   4. Meekness is a quality Jesus put on full display in His life! Jesus never asks us to do something He Himself was not willing to do. We serve a God who knows what it’s like because He left Heaven to become a man (Phil. 2:5-7). Jesus had power and abilities the likes no man ever possessed, yet He chose to forego it for the greater goal and the greater good (Matt. 11:29; 26:53-54; 27:39-43; Jn. 12:27).
   5. We are here today because of the meekness of Christ. Who knows who we can save and encourage by practicing meekness in our lives? Those who are meek will inherit the earth (promised land, kingdom, church, heaven). They will have access to God’s blessings because they brought their power under control.

**Conclusion:** The Kingdom is the foundation of the gospel because it is the only way we will live forever. If we don’t get in the kingdom now, then we won’t reap the great benefits of the kingdom to come. Jesus repeatedly emphasized the importance of the church and heaven because it is what He left Heaven for. Jesus did not come to earth for some trivial joy ride. He left Heaven so we could live there forever. He offered His life on the cross for an ungrateful, selfish and prideful people. But now that we know what it takes to enter and access the kingdom, are we willing to be *“poor in spirit?”* Am I ready to face my sin, admit my wrongs and mourn with a vision to repentance? Am I going to control my power for the sake of the greater good and the greater goal? Becoming a part of the kingdom takes humility and repentance. Do you have what it takes?